



Annual Report 2018



Front Cover: Arabian gazelle
Twizted Myrtle



His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said

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A photograph of an Arabian red fox standing on a sand dune. The fox is facing left, looking off-camera. It has large, upright ears and a slender build. The background is a dark, rocky landscape under a clear sky. The fox's fur is a mix of light tan and white, with darker patches on its back and legs. The lighting is bright, casting a shadow on the sand.

Arabian red fox,
Zakariya Al Maskari

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Message from the President

I am pleased to announce that in 2018 we had many achievements despite the difficulty in securing funding. We were able to increase the capacity of our team by having 12 members of our staff and board attending 14 international workshops, thereby increasing knowledge within the ESO team and reaching out to communities to raise awareness.

Over the years ESO's community outreach has been successful in engaging with 842 schools, 9,000 school students and 1,000 college students nationwide. In Dhofar 7,500 trees have been planted and through clean ups 10,000kg of rubbish has been collected as well as an estimated 190,000kg of abandoned fishing gear and nets. It is these abandoned nets, that threaten turtles and other wildlife, that has propelled ESO to look at a behavioural change study targeting fishermen on Masirah Island and beyond.

I am proud to announce that in 2018 ESO was awarded the GCC Ministers' Committee of Social Development Award for "Leading Role in Sustainable Development."

On the research side we have had to shelve a few projects due to lack of funding. One such is the Raptor Research and Conservation Project; the Egyptian vulture is an endangered species but has not been studied in Oman since 2014. The Balkan Peninsula is home to fewer than 90 pairs of Egyptian vultures, and they have spent thousands of Euros in the past five years to prevent the extinction of this species in their territory. In Oman, more than 200 pairs have been recorded in one site at one time, which shows Oman to be home to one of the densest populations in the world. It is imperative that we secure further funding to continue formal research on this species to understand its behaviour and movement.

We have been able to continue the Turtle Research and Conservation Project which confirms the ongoing trend of decline in loggerhead turtle numbers, and that all marine turtles on Masirah need our attention. The challenges are numerous and include the human impact on beaches and at sea. ESO has continued to advocate for conservation action and to implement community outreach programs.

On a more positive note, it is very pleasing to see that the worldwide issue of plastic waste has been massively highlighted of late. This was an issue we at ESO had pioneered in 2008, and I hope to see legislation to reduce plastic bags and single-use plastics in Oman in the near future. I hope that you personally consider this a change to make this year and join the rest of the world in refusing single-use plastic where you can - a simple and achievable task.

Our work continues to be supported by companies who believe in our cause and have partnered with us over the years. Our Annual Report is a testament to what your funds continue to enable us to achieve. I would like to thank all our corporate members for the ongoing support you have provided us, as well as our other supporters, be it from private sector companies or personal donations. Through your support and sponsorship we are able to pursue our goal of conserving Oman's natural heritage for future generations.

We are grateful to our members and volunteers who help us when we ask and to the various Ministries who continue to support our work.

Tania S Al Said
President



Introduction



As the only environmental civil society in Oman, we have a big responsibility towards biodiversity conservation in Oman. It is always important to note that the health of ecosystems, the health of our air, water quality and fisheries resources are reflected in the health of human communities. As such, it is important for us to jointly act as a community to strive and do our best to play our part in ensuring that we maintain healthy ecosystems for today and for the future.

In 2018, ESO engaged with several communities across the Sultanate to raise environmental awareness on our shared responsibilities towards environmental conservation. Examples of our work include over 50 community visits and engagement sessions with dolphin watching operators in Musandam and fishermen on Masirah Island, showing the connectivity between economic and natural resources. This connectivity should not be undermined and we are committed to promote the need for a balanced and sustainable approach to human activities for both environmental and societal well-being.

At the local level, we have coordinated with the private sector and the Ministries and engaged in several key strategic meetings in which we voiced the importance of taking a balanced approach to economic development. We have contributed environmental data to support the Oman National Spatial Strategy and the Oman Plant and Animal Genetics Resources Center for the development of an app on Oman's Wildlife.

Our involvement at the regional and international levels is ongoing, with contributions at the International Whaling Commission meetings to continue to provide evidence to support the importance of conservation of the endangered Arabian Sea humpback whales. ESO was accepted as an observer and attended the RAMSAR Conference on Wetlands of International Significance in which we delivered a statement on behalf of NGOs as part of the World Wetland Network. We were also involved as part of the organizing committee for the First International Conference on Frankincense and Medicinal Plants which was held in Muscat this year.

Our team is committed to furthering environmental policy, conservation, environmental education and communication, and fundraising. One of the main challenges we face is the lack of funding. This year, we are grateful to have four hotels within our hotel donations program helping to raise funds and we hope to see more hotels join the program in the years to come.

Our accomplishments over the past year would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors, partners, volunteers, media and members and we thank you all for your continued support. We commit to addressing pressing environmental issues in Oman through dedication, partnership and collaboration at various levels.

I hope you will enjoy reading this annual report and we look forward to further achievements in subsequent years.

Best Wishes,
Suaad Al Harthi
Executive Director

ESO Board

President

HH Sayyida Tania bint Shabib Al Said holds a BSc in Marine and Freshwater Biology and a Diploma in Early Childhood Education. She is a founding member of ESO and has served as the President of the board of directors of ESO since its establishment. Sayyida Tania initiated the Say No to Plastic Bags Campaign, organises the annual ESO fundraising ball as well as the annual corporate ECO BOWL competition. She represents ESO in the media and helps with fundraising initiatives. Currently Sayyida Tania is working on the renewal of the ESO strategy and is updating the old constitution to bring it in line with current work and operations.

Vice President

Mr Amor Nasser Al Matani holds a BEng (Hons) and an MBA. After graduating from Teesside University, UK in 1990 as an Instrumentation and Control Engineer he joined Petroleum Development Oman in upstream operations and commissioning. In 1993 he moved to the Ministry of Health where he occupied a number of executive positions, including Deputy Director General for Administration and Finance at the Royal Hospital, Oman's largest hospital for specialised medical care. He completed his MBA (Newcastle) in 1997 before being appointed Director General for Sur Industrial Estate in the Public Establishment of Industrial Estates. He joined Oman LNG in 2002 as Deputy CEO and is also the Chief HR Executive Officer. Mr Al Matani has a passion for better working and safe environments and is a proactive leader in striving for a cleaner Oman. He has a keen interest in education and is a member of several university and technical college boards. He is Chairman of the Board of Trustees for OLNG's HAS International School and is also the Chairman of the Oman Road Safety Association.

Director

Mr Ahmed Al Rashdi holds an MBA in Business Administration and Management from the University of Bedfordshire. He is an environmental activist interested in the vegetation of Oman and a co-founder of the Civil Initiative for the Cultivation of Native Plants in Jabal Al Akhdar, he is also very interested in promoting organic farming and seeks to standardize it in Oman. Ahmed has 12 years experience in the aluminum smelting industry and in the airport and aviation industry. Currently Ahmed is managing the Asset Data of the new Muscat International Airport and Salalah Airport. He had the chance to participate in the mobile Environment Research Unit - Hajar Mountains Biodiversity Survey in 2015. Over the last two years on the board of ESO, Ahmed has played a key role in HR, education and community outreach where his interest has taken him to Buraimi, Masirah and Dhofar. He is very keen to continue his involvement with local communities and students as well as other key stakeholders. Ahmed has represented ESO in the office of Oman Vision 2040 and participate in the Future Quest Forum in 2017.

Treasurer

Mr Osamah Abdullatif is currently Assistant General Manager - Project Finance at Bank Muscat. He is one of ESO's founding members and was a board member from 2004-2012. During his time on the board he held positions including Executive Director, in which he set up ESO's first office and hired its first full time staff members, and Treasurer. He is banker with 22 years' experience, most of which are with Bank Muscat. Among the positions he has held is CEO of Bank Muscat in Kuwait (2012-2016). His department is responsible for the Bank's membership in the Equator Principles, a risk management framework adopted by financial institutions for determining, assessing and managing environmental and social risks in projects. Osamah has a Bachelor's in Finance from California State University, a Master's in Business IT Systems from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, and has completed the General Management Program at Harvard Business School.

Board Member

Ms Dareen Mehdi is the interim head of the Education and Communication department at Oman Botanic Garden. Upon finishing a degree in Biotechnology at Sultan Qaboos University, she started work as an Environmental Education Specialist at Oman Botanic Garden where she worked to promote the garden, its mission and goals through participating in exhibitions, delivering presentations to a wide range of audiences. Dareen completed her MSc in Conservation Science at Imperial College, London, UK after which she returned to OBG. She has special interests in environmental education, public outreach and the promotion of nature conservation and social empowerment through preservation of local livelihoods and traditional practices.



Board Member

Mr Waheed Al Fazari is the Head of Wildlife Division at the Office for Conservation of Environment, Diwan of Royal Court. He holds a BSc in Environmental Biology from Sultan Qaboos University and has received training in the USA in avian research (bald eagles) and in national parks management. He is also a member of the Oman Bird Record Committee, a Lifeline Earth specialist advisor and a member of other national committees. He has 10 years' experience in Oman wildlife studies, research and conservation. Waheed has contributed to eight referred journal papers in topics that include ornithology, mammal studies and conservation. His highlighted projects are the Sooty Falcon Project with OCE and other international institutions, the Egyptian Vulture Project with ESO and International Avian Research, Survey of Waders and Barr Al Hikman with MECA, NIOZ and Wetland International, Illegal bird hunting in Oman with Birdlife International and ESO. His current duties include supervising several wild species studies such as the Nubian Ibex Project, Arabian Tahr Project and Arabian Gazelles Project. Waheed is also distinguished with the title Artist (A-FIAP) from The International Federation of Photographic Art, a member of Photographic Society of Oman and a winner of several national and international wildlife photographic competitions.

Secretary

Mr Ammar H Mohamed graduated in 2002 from Pennsylvania State University, USA with a Master's in Architectural Engineering, specialising in Lighting Design. He worked in the USA for two years before returning to Oman and joining the Royal Court Affairs, where he currently holds the position of the Senior Lighting Specialist and head of the Lighting Design Department at the Central Design Office of the Royal Estates. Ammar is a green building advocate, holds the 'LEED Green Associate' credential from the United States Green Building Council and is currently preparing for his 'LEED Accredited Professional' credential. He has lectured about green buildings and energy efficient lighting at the Sultan Qaboos University and other colleges in Oman and has also been involved in a number of studies related to green building and using daylight and clean energy at the Royal Estates.

ESO Board

Membership Officer

Mr Omar Al Riyami holds a Master's in Environmental Impact Assessment and Management from the University of Manchester, UK and a BSc in Marine Science and Fisheries from the Sultan Qaboos University. He is a former ESO employee who served the organization from 2009 to 2013 and occupied many positions including Marine Projects Assistant Manager, Membership and Volunteer Manager and Community Outreach Manager. He participated in many ESO projects and activities such as the Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Project, Turtle Research and Conservation Project and Annual Masirah Festival, Earth Hour and the Native Tree Planting Campaign, as well as delivering environmental awareness presentations to all levels of the community. During his time with ESO, Omar represented Arab youth in the UNESCO's conference on the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, Japan 2011. Omar currently works as the lead Environment Engineer at Duqm Refinery and Petrochemicals Oman.

PR Officer

Ms Rumaitha Al Busaidi is an advocate for sustainability, youth involvement and innovation in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Most recently, she has been overseeing investments of the governments of Oman and Qatar in the fisheries and aquaculture sector as an aquaculture specialist in Al Hosn Investment Company. Rumaitha was a recipient of the Royal Netherlands Society of Arts & Sciences fellowship allowing her to pursue her studies in the Netherlands and work as a researcher at the Netherlands Institute of Ecology, resulting in a series of publications. She is also a key participant of the National Program for Enhancing Economic Diversification (Tanfeedh) currently serving as Vice Chair of the Food Manufacturing sectorial working group. An award-winning radio presenter and sportswoman, Rumaitha is credited with being the first female football analyst in the Arab world; a feat that she only could achieve due to her passion for the sport and being part of the Oman women's national football team. Rumaitha also became the youngest Omani woman to step foot on the South Pole and has climbed Mounts Kilimanjaro and Damavand. Rumaitha holds two MSc degrees in Marine Pollution and Aquaculture Management. She is also part of the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Community and was recently named by the European Commission as a One Young World Peace Ambassador.

Board Member

Dr Mohammed Saif Al Kalbani holds a PhD in Environmental Sustainability from the University of Aberdeen, UK. He has MSc and BSc in Environmental Engineering Sciences and Management. He worked as Research Assistant at Sultan Qaboos University and then at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs as Director of Environment and Sustainable Development. He has participated in many research projects related to integrated environmental assessment, environment preservation, biodiversity conservation, climate change and environmental management and legislation. He has published several articles in international journals and has participated in the preparation of the 4th and 5th Global Environmental Outlook Reports for UNEP and Arab Environmental Outlook Report for Arab League. Dr Al Kalbani has presented many papers at international, regional and national conferences, symposiums, and workshops; and has participated in International meetings related to environmental conventions and protocols, and attended many other conferences, symposiums, workshops, exhibitions and training, as well as capacity building courses. He has memberships in different social societies and has received several awards and distinctions as an active employee, researcher, and social member from government officials, academic and research institutes and non-governmental organisations. Dr Mohammed currently works as the Director of Inspection and Control at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs.

ESO Staff



1. **Suaad Al Harthi**
Executive Director
2. **Bashaar Zaitoon**
Administrative Manager
3. **Maïa Sarrouf Willson**
Research and Conservation Manager
4. **Dr Hamed Al Gheilani**
Community Outreach Manager
5. **Antonia Vegh**
Events and Volunteerism Coordinator
6. **Juma Al Humaidi**
Field Assistant
7. **Yusra Jaffer**
Public Relations Manager
8. **Aisha Al Ghallabi**
Membership Coordinator
9. **Said Al Jabri**
Public Relations Officer
10. **Asma Al Balushi**
Research and Conservation Coordinator
11. **Ghasi Al Farsi**
Field Coordinator
12. **Jenan Al Asfoor**
Corporate Relations Manager
13. **Juma Al Araimi**
Field Assistant
14. **Jawaher Al Ghafri**
Education Coordinator
15. **Atika Ahmed**
Accountant

Marine Conservation Projects



Turtle Research and Conservation

The global importance of Oman to the survival of sea turtles has been definitively established through surveys and research conducted within the Sultanate over the past 40 years. In the last nine years, ESO, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs (MECA)** and senior international scientists, has played the lead research role on turtles in the Sultanate. We have accelerated our knowledge and understanding of turtle biology, ecology and conservation needs, as well as raised the international profile of Oman's turtles. ESO was able to secure funding from the **Marine Turtle Conservation Act - US Fish and Wildlife Service (US FWS)** to support the Turtle Research and Conservation Project in 2018.

The project is based mainly on Masirah Island and focuses on loggerhead turtles. Outside of the loggerhead nesting season, field assistants monitor green, hawksbill and olive ridley turtles. In 2013, an initial review of 2008-2012 loggerhead nesting data revealed the first indication of a dramatic decline in loggerhead nesting on Masirah, with a reduction in nesting females by approximately two-thirds from the pre-1980 estimates. The recent estimated numbers of loggerhead turtles nesting on Masirah further confirm these alarming figures. An average of 11,000 female turtles are estimated to have visited the island in 2014, compared to an estimation of 30,000 to 40,000 females in the late 1970s. The major threats that impact both the habitat and population numbers are land-use disturbances such as extensive coastal development, light pollution and beach driving, and sea-based disturbances such as turtles being caught in fishing nets by mistake (bycatch).

A 2015 assessment of loggerhead sea turtle populations by the IUCN Species Survival Commission assigned (Oman's) North-West Indian Ocean loggerhead subpopulation as critically endangered, thus facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future. *The assessment was attributed to the reported nesting decline on Masirah Island.*

Community Outreach and Public Engagement

Several community outreach activities were planned throughout the year to raise awareness on the importance of marine turtles, the main aim being to introduce conservation actions by reducing light pollution on Masirah Island. These visits included meetings with, and presentations to, the local community.



Short videos were produced including interviews with community members and we thank **Masirah Municipality**, the **Wali of Masirah**, the **Women's Association of Masirah**, the **Royal Air Force of Oman** and **MECA** for their support during these visits.

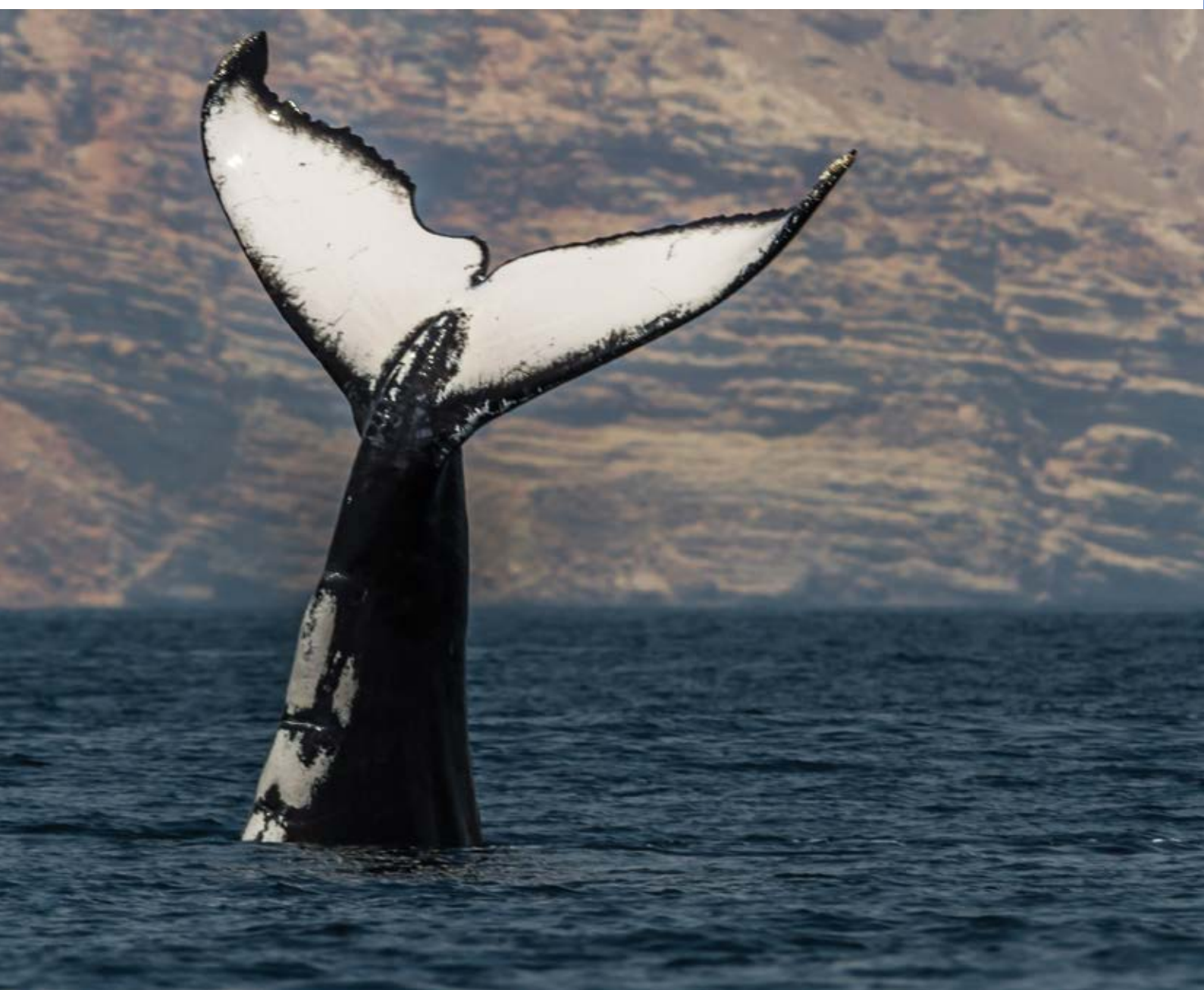


Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Conservation

Thanks to the renewed support of **Renaissance Services SAOG**, the Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Conservation Project, which began in 2011, has continued throughout 2018 in coordination with the **Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs** and the **Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries**. Our research and conservation efforts over the last few years have focused on Arabian Sea humpback whales. Humpbacks are world famous for undertaking long seasonal migrations between polar feeding areas and tropical breeding areas but our research has shown Arabian Sea humpback whales to be the only known population in the world not to migrate, but rather to breed and feed in the same geographic area. This makes them truly Arabian whales! Not only are these whales distinct in this regard, but our recent research also indicates they are one of the smallest and potentially most vulnerable whale populations in the world, numbering fewer than 100 individuals in Oman.

We are also very excited to be working with **Shell Development Oman LLC** on acoustic data processing (further information below).

Construction at Duqm and increased oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of Masirah will inevitably transform this core humpback whale habitat in Oman into a busy industrial area along with coastal tourism, a large fishing harbour and aquaculture. Threats to whales in this region are significant, with measurable consequences for the health of the population as a whole.





Passive Acoustic Monitoring

From 2011-2013 Marine Acoustic Recording Units were deployed in the Gulf of Masirah and in Hallaniyat Bay, previously identified as hotspot areas. The monitoring allowed for whale detection, noise and song analysis and is significant in providing information on critical habitats, understanding the impact of noise-related human activities and understanding whale behaviour. Data from this work has been processed with the support of **Shell Development Oman** and in collaboration with the **New England Aquarium**.

Whale Detection - the analysis of acoustic recording showed that the population utilizes both the Gulf of Masirah and Hallaniyat Bay for breeding. However, the Hallaniyats had more frequent singing by Arabian Sea humpback whales, suggesting it may be a more important breeding area. Nevertheless, the study clearly indicated that both locations are considered 'hot spots' for the population.

Noise Analysis - analysis was completed in 2017 and by identifying the sources of anthropogenic noises, the information can be used to assess risk to whales and dolphins and develop mitigation strategies. The noise analysis revealed increased noise levels in proximity to the Port of Duqm and reduced singing activity from humpback whales – possibly indicating that increased noise levels from shipping traffic are either disturbing the humpbacks or masking the whale vocalizations, which requires further investigation.

Song Analysis - humpback whale songs tend to change from year to year, as new phrases are adapted, known as 'cultural evolution.' However, the humpbacks off Oman seem to be singing a similar song every year. This has not been documented in other populations and may show that the Arabian humpbacks are less flexible learners and may reflect their small population size.

Typically, when humpback whale populations come into contact with one another their songs become similar or share the same patterns. Although the Arabian Sea humpback whale has been genetically isolated from the southern hemisphere populations for 70,000 years, the acoustic recordings show humpback whales with a similar song to those in Reunion, India and Comoros Islands singing during our summer months when the Omani humpbacks aren't singing. The Omani humpbacks have not picked up any phrases from the songs from neighbouring areas. This indicates that the southern hemisphere whales are visiting Oman, but it is unclear why their songs do not appear to be integrating.

Capacity Building and National/Regional Collaboration

A cetacean conservation workshop organised by the **Arabian Sea Whale Network (ASWN)** with funding from the **International Whaling Commission, WWF International, WWF Pakistan, EWS-WWF** and ESO took place in Oman in January 2018. Entitled *Managing data for whale conservation in the Arabian Sea: A practical introduction to the ASWN Flukebook online data platform*, it aimed to help ASWN data platform users to become familiar with a cetacean photo-identification platform, in collaboration with Wild Me. 21 participants from more than five countries around the Indian Ocean and beyond met to discuss cetacean research methods, data types and data storage needs. The workshop also included country progress reports from Oman, Iran, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India, and examples of working with fisheries for data collection and cetacean conservation around the world.



The 12th Meeting of the **Convention of Migratory Species (CMS)** Conference of Parties (Manila, October 2017) saw the endorsement of a *Concerted Action for the Arabian Sea Humpback Whale* to prevent further decline and promote recovery of the population. By 2020 the Concerted Action aims to address knowledge gaps, promote information sharing and awareness and build capacity to develop and implement mitigation strategies within the region.

The **IWC Scientific Committee** meeting in April 2018 in Bled, Slovenia, provided an opportunity for ESO to present whale research, and was represented by Executive Director, Suaad al Harthi. Various papers were presented from both Oman as well as the wider Arabian Sea Whale Network including Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India providing information on whale research and conservation efforts in the Arabian Sea. The papers were well received and generated valuable discussion and feedback. The scientific committee commended the work that had been done and encouraged the continuation of the various research and conservation efforts underway.

ESO is a member of the **Arabian Sea Whale Network**. Members include representatives from the UAE, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Iran and India as well as international research partners. The network updates members on new sightings and strandings, which has increased the number of confirmed records from countries within the range helping to further understand whale distribution. An online regional data platform will be launched in 2018 to share data and research protocols among members.

At the local level, ESO is a member of the **National Stranding Response Committee** which is led by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs (MECA) and includes several key stakeholders including: the Coast Guard – Royal Oman Police, the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), the Diwan of Royal Court, the Ministry of Health, Muscat Municipality, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), the Royal Navy of Oman, the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), the Museum of Natural History and the Oman Plant and Animal Genetic Resources Center. ESO is also a member of the Technical Committee, which provides technical advice and recommendations to the National Stranding Response Committee.

In August, MECA, ESO, Five Oceans Environmental Services and the Pacific Whale Foundation (PWF) collaborated to organise a two-day workshop on **Responsible Whale and Dolphin Watching**. The workshop was held in Muscat, Oman, and hosted by MECA. The participants included representatives from ESO, Five Oceans, MECA, the Coast Guard - ROP, MAF, MOT, the Ministry of Transport and Communication (MoTC), the Port of Duqm, and SQU (Marine Science and Fisheries). Participants agreed that the initial step for the development of responsible whale and dolphin watching guidelines is the formation of a national planning committee under the Ministry of Tourism. In the meantime, ESO and MECA will coordinate with MoTC on developing mutual awareness raising campaigns to target boat owners and operators.

Meanwhile, ESO continues to build the capacity of our three Field Assistants based on Masirah Island. The training has also enabled them to independently conduct stranding surveys along the entire coastline of the Island, which contributes to the stranding databases used for both cetaceans and sea turtles.

Net Entanglement Behaviour Change Campaign

Entanglement with net fisheries has been documented as a major threat to the ASHW population, with previous analysis of photographic records revealing 30-40% of population showing signs of entanglement in nets. The entanglement of marine wildlife in fishing gear has grown considerably in scale since the 1970s and it is recognized as one of the major environmental issues worldwide. It is mainly due to the high use of synthetic materials in fishing gear. A fishermen behavioral change campaign has been initiated to address this problem on Masirah Island, by providing a series of interventions revolving around mitigation, increasing convenience, community engagement, advocacy, education and on-the-ground activities. The study utilises community-based social marketing as a tool and this will be the focus for this project in 2019.



Terrestrial Conservation Projects

Raptor Research and Conservation

Raptors, or birds of prey, such as eagles, falcons, vultures, hawks and owls are key indicators of the overall health of the ecosystem. Sitting at the top of the food chain they provide many ecosystem services. An example of this is that they eat millions of insects, which, if left unchecked, could threaten agriculture. They also consume animal carcasses, which in turn, prevents the spread of disease. Raptors also face a wide variety of threats. Over the last few decades, human activities have contributed to the fragmentation and destruction of raptor habitats through development. Also, the intensification of agriculture and other land-use practices; electrocution and collision with power infrastructure; shooting, poisoning and trapping; and reduced breeding success due to pesticides and other contaminants are affecting raptors negatively. These continuing threats have led to the reduction in population levels and to the reduction of the geographic range of many species.

Oman is known to be a haven for a variety of raptors including the globally endangered Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), one of the region's most threatened bird species. ESO started researching this vulture in 2012, showing the country to be a stronghold for this species. Our studies have shown that Masirah Island hosts the second highest density of breeding Egyptian vultures in the world. Current gaps in understanding vulture ecology and movement have led to a collaboration with International Avian Research and the Bernd Meyburg Foundation for Raptor Research and Conservation to fix satellite tags to raptors in Oman. In 2018, 12 Egyptian vultures were tracked in Al Multaqah landfill, expecting that many would be migratory. However, none have migrated and only one vulture made it to the South of Iran. These 12 vultures are the first adult vultures tagged following the tagging of 4 juveniles between 2015 and 2017. This suggests that Egyptian vultures in Oman are mostly non-migratory residents, and that the population is much larger than expected.

ESO's research has strongly demonstrated the value of studying the spatial ecology of Egyptian vultures and other raptors to inform conservation management. Mapping out threats such as low voltage electricity power lines and coupling this with information on their movement can contribute to the development of sensitivity maps as a tool for conservation.

Sadly, ESO has been unable to secure funding required to continue this project further in 2018.





Egyptian vulture

Community Outreach and Education Projects



Musandam

In April this year the community outreach team implemented a comprehensive program in Musandam. The aim was to introduce the richness of Oman's northern biodiversity and villages targeted were Kamzar, Khasab, Buka, Dibba and Madha. We are grateful to have been able to reach both school children and the **Oman Women's Association**. In addition, discussions were held with local fishermen regarding the effects of net disposal in the ocean and on beaches, and also with local tour operators with regards to whale and dolphin watching best practices. Thank you to the many volunteers who enabled this campaign to be a success and especially to those who worked hard planting native trees during the visit to Buka. In addition we would like to thank the **Ministry of Education** and the **Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs** for their support.



Salalah

In August the team travelled to Salalah to work with the **Salalah Scouts** during the Khareef (monsoon) season. **Dhofar University** and the **College of Applied Science and Higher Technology** were also visited and the upcoming speaking competition was discussed. In September, in collaboration with the **Oman Botanical Garden**, an awareness trip was made to nine schools in three areas of Dhofar (Shat, Samhan, and Al Kara Mountains). In addition to the visits, ESO assisted in a research study of *Dracaena*.

Masirah

ESO's Turtle Research and Conservation Project focuses mainly on Masirah Island and it is a priority to raise awareness of the global importance of the loggerhead turtle amongst the local community on the Island. In September and December the community outreach team along with ESO's local Field Assistants organised different presentations, activities and discussions with the Masirah community. The main objective of the first trip was to introduce conservation actions needed to mitigate the effect of light

pollution on Loggerhead turtle populations. Meetings were held with important stakeholders: **Royal Oman Air Force**, the **Wali of Masirah**, **MECA**, **Oman**, the **Royal Oman Police**, **Masirah Municipality**, and the fishing community. In addition, discussions were held with over 50 fishermen regarding the effect of discarded nets and how to mitigate this. We are grateful to **Sara Hale** from **BoomaOman** for accompanying the team and producing a short turtle awareness film, which is being used during outreach visits.



Seventh Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition

In cooperation with **Emirates Environmental Group**, ESO held the Seventh Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition, organised with the aim of developing a deep appreciation of the environment and an understanding of the challenges facing it through study, research, discussion and debate.

176 competing students (40 teams), representing 19 colleges and universities from across the Sultanate, were challenged to build and present strong cases on different contemporary issues and questions relating to the environment. The competition gives the participants a wonderful opportunity to showcase knowledge and talent and served as a good networking opportunity for government and private academic institutions.

Sponsored by **Mitsui E&P Middle East BV** (Gold Sponsors), **Ominvest** (Silver Sponsors), **CGG**, **Shell**, **Daleel Petroleum LLC** and **Oman LNG Development Foundation** (Bronze Sponsors) and supported by **TRACCS Oman**, **ESHRAQA (Khimji Ramdas Social Development Arm)**, **Pinky Bell**, the **Cultural Club**, **Pinz Center** and **Luban**, the competition was held from 22nd – 23rd October under the patronage of HE Mohammed Salim Al Tobi, the Minister of Environment and Climate Affairs.

A distinguished panel of judges was invited to evaluate the performances of the participants:

Mr Ibrahim Al Ajmi, DG of Climate Affairs

Ms Fatma Bahwan, Co-Founder of Al Rud'ha Oman

Ms Habiba Al Marashi, Co-Founder and Chairperson, EEG, United Arab Emirates

Ms Fatima Al Dawodi, Culture Activities specialist – Ministry of Education

Winning Teams

'Sustainable Built Environment: Are we achieving it?' – **Sultan Qaboos University** (Horiah Al Hosni, Buthina Al Amri, Khawla Al Amri, Meitha Al Shamsi)

'Impact of Fashion and Make up Industry on the Environment' - **Sultan Qaboos University** (Abeer Al Jabri, Mariyam Al Rumhi, Rahma Al Harasi, Oaima Al Hadrami, Jokha Al Rawahi)

'The Future of Agriculture in Middle East' – **A'Sharqiyah University** (Asila Al Amri, Maryam Al Mughairi, Maryam Al Baloushi, Ashwaq Al Ghafri, Balaqis Al Shaaibi).



'The Impact of Wars on the Environment' - **Military Technical College** (Ali Al Balushi, Ali Al Mahrizi, Muath Al Hasani, AlMualla Al Maamari, Mohammed Al Abri)

Following the success of the National Competition, the winners were mentored and given further presentation skills by **ESHRAQA (Khimji Training Institute)**. They then met with HE Mohammed Al Tobi, the Minister of Environment and Climate Affairs, for a discussion on environmental issues with the winning students.



Regional Competition

The winning teams then went on to compete at the Regional Competition, which was held in Dubai in late November. Dareen Mehdi, ESO Board Member joined the panel of judges. ESO is very proud that several teams from Oman scored top places at the regional competition. Team "Synergy" from the Higher College of Technology won first place for their compelling discussion on the 'Impact of fashion and makeup industry on the environment', while team "Naqa" from Sultan Qaboos University followed in third. The "Kaizen" team from A'sharqiah University took second place for their discussion on 'The Future of Agriculture in the Middle East' while Team "Bunya" from Sultan Qaboos University were awarded third place in the 'Sustainable built Environment' debate. Team "Green Footprint" from Military Collage of Technology came third in the discussion on the 'Impact of Wars on the Environment'.



Earth Hour 2018

2018 saw a huge success in ESO joining the global initiative of Earth Hour, which aims to demonstrate concerns about the future of our planet by doing something simple, yet remarkable – turning off lights for one hour on the last Saturday in March at 8.30pm. This year we were proud to partner with **Special Technical Services** and **Zawawi Group/Carillion Alawi**.

In-kind supporters included: **Xcape Muscat**, **Deepam Oddissi Academy**, **Towell Engineering**, **Crowne Plaza Muscat**, **Pinky Bell** and **Talentz Enterprises**.

The global theme in 2018 was **Connect 2 Earth** so ESO focused on raising awareness about global biodiversity and its importance to ecosystems. Using social and conventional media ESO held a large-scale awareness-raising campaign. It was an incredible display of community participation and culminated in a scavenger hunt at the **Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex** in collaboration with Xcape Muscat, which revolved around a missing humpback whale named Luban. This idea was based on one of our tagged Arabian Sea humpbacks, which was tagged in November the previous year. Remarkably, she was the first whale to be documented crossing from Oman to India where she spent a couple of months, she then completed her journey and returned to the Gulf of Masirah where she was originally tagged. The documentary 'Mission Blue' was also screened at the event, which highlights the story of world-renowned oceanographer and ocean ambassador Dr Sylvia Earle as she makes her journey around the world on a mission to protect the Earth's oceans.

Media support was received from **TRACCS Oman**, **Apex Press and Publishing (Muscat Daily, The Week)**, **Muscat Media Group (Al Shabiba, Times of Oman)**, and **Al Roya**. The support enabled ESO to get the message out across Oman and engage volunteers. ESO was honoured that the **Royal Opera House Muscat**, the **Grand Mosque**, **Muscat Municipality** and **Sultan Qaboos University** also joined in the initiative and turned off all non-essential lighting.



Eco Summer Program

ESO's one-week long summer program aimed to educate youth and raise awareness of environmental issues by implementing Sustainable Development Goals. The program targeted children aged between 9-15 years old. Activities included: Marine Life, Young Inventor and Our History, and Healthy Meals. We would like to thank **Yusuf Al Lamki** and **Nasir Al Abri** from the Elderly Care Home and **Hawa Al Shariqi** for her assistance in this program. Special thanks to **Al Rustaq Sports Club** for providing the venue and refreshments.

School Education Program

ESO's Environmental Education Program, sponsored by **PDO**, aims to raise environmental awareness amongst Omani youth through a program designed for school children in different parts of the Sultanate. In collaboration with the **Ministry of Education**, the program endeavours to implement four themes over the 2-year project period: Energy and Water, Biodiversity, Ecological Footprint and Green Schools. During 2018, with the help of dedicated volunteers, 24 schools were visited with a focus on the green school theme. Games and interactive tools were developed and presentations were given at schools in, Rustaq, Barka, Musnah, Izki, Manah, Bahla, Sohar, Saham, Al Khabora, Al Swaiq and Ibri.



Other Outreach Activities in Communities and Schools

ESO's has a dedicated Community Outreach Department, which focuses on supporting ESO's aim to raise awareness on environmental conservation and engage members through lectures, events and activities. ESO aims to reach out to different sectors of the community including women, children in schools, fishermen and the general public.

ESO's dedicated community outreach team tailors presentations to different communities based on their local environments and biodiversity. Presentations include areas such as Sustainable Frankincense Gathering, Oman's Biodiversity, ESO Research, Recycling, Climate Change, Clean-Ups and discussions on ESO's conservation work.



Women and children are seen to be key drivers to societal change and ESO has been targeting these groups across the Sultanate, presenting environmental awareness lectures on important biological components and the ways in which our actions impact the environment. School and college presentations and lectures to the Omani Women's Associations took place throughout the year.

In celebration of World Environment Day (5th June), ESO asked members to participate and spread environmental awareness. We would like to highlight the efforts of **Al Atheer Private School** for arranging their own recycling competition and ESO member **Dr Smitha** who gave excellent presentations to her students.

On December 2-15 a large-scale net clean-up drive took place on Masirah Island and an estimated 190 tons of discarded fishing nets and gear were collected and disposed of. We are grateful to everyone that helped in this effort.

In addition, clean-ups, lectures and field trips were organised by ESO throughout the year and across the Sultanate and continue to be a core part of ESO's commitment to ensuring participatory events for members.



Capacity Building Program

ESO has been steadily growing over the last ten years and it remains our goal to train Omanis in the field of environmental conservation. In 2011 we found ourselves faced with a major restructuring of staff in order to keep up with the growing responsibilities and projects that ESO has and wants to continue taking on.

It was agreed by the ESO Board that a central part of ESO's mandate would be to train Omani graduates in conservation strategies and NGO and community involvement before joining Oman's workforce and give them an opportunity to pursue a career with ESO.

Since 2012, ESO has speedily been making progress in the area of capacity building. In 2018 six Omanis were included in the Capacity Building Program.

Omani Training Program

Although graduates are trained in a specific area of NGO management, each leave the training program with experience in the following areas:

- NGO Management
- Project Management
- Conservation Management
- In-Field Research Experience
- Community Outreach
- Awareness Raising
- Volunteer Management



Asma Al Balushi

Asma graduated from Sultan Qaboos University in 2011 with a BSc in Marine Science. She was recruited for the position of Projects Management Coordinator in the Research and Conservation Department and has been with ESO since April 2012, assisting in coordination of all research - field and desk-based activities. One of her essential tasks is liaising with government entities, such as the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. She ensures that results of our scientific projects are regularly shared with relevant parties. She is a member of the National Stranding Response Committee. This year, she participated in the Kuwait Fishackathon on a project for fisherman engagement organized by Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (sponsored by the Centre for Research in Informatics Science and Engineering, the US Embassy and

Hacker net). She also completed training on Crises Management with Shell Development Oman which will be of much use to apply in several projects.

Juma Al Humaidi, Ghasi Al Farsi and Juma Al Araimi

Juma, Ghasi and Juma have been working for ESO since 2009 as part-time Field Assistants (FAs) on Masirah Island. Although they were initially recruited and trained by ESO to help with field surveys of loggerhead turtles, their contributions have been unparalleled in terms of creating ties with the local community in Masirah. Our FAs have now been working full-time with ESO for seven years, assisting in the field with our Turtle Research and Conservation Project, the Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Conservation Project and the Egyptian Vulture Research and Conservation Project. Not only have the FAs been trained in field surveying methods, they have completed courses in computing, English, typing, bird identification and ringing, and whale and dolphin identification. They have worked with experts from the US, Netherlands,



Bulgaria and the UK. On top of their regular data collection duties, they helped coordinate the visit of experts from the US Fish and Wildlife Service in July 2018; and assisted in the completion of a lighting impact assessment on marine turtles on Masirah Island.



Aisha Al Ghallabi

Aisha Al Ghallabi holds a BSc in Environmental Health Management from the Canadian University of Dubai and joined ESO as a Membership Coordinator in 2015. Throughout 2018, she worked hard on organizing and further revitalizing the membership department. Her efforts led to the organization of ten public lectures throughout the year, some attended by over 100 people. Presentations included various topics ranging from terrestrial and marine species conservation to personal environmental experiences (Photographing Elusive Leopards, A Hitchhiker's Environmental Exploration and Travellers of the Deep Blue). Aisha is enthusiastic and has continued developing initiatives in the membership department in 2018: the organisation of environmentally themed movie nights, members' outdoor activities and the initiation of membership benefits. The

latter includes a series of retail relationships in various fields (food and beverage, recreational, beauty and fitness) that will provide discounts and benefits to ESO members. These activities have increased engagement with members and spread awareness of sensitive environmental topics. Next year Aisha will focus her efforts on further developing this department and liaising with and increasing membership.

Jawaher Al Ghafri

Jawaher Al Ghafri holds a Bachelor of Communication Studies from Sur College of Applied Sciences and joined ESO as an Education Coordinator in March 2016. She took over the leadership of the Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition during which time she liaised with supervisors of student teams and ensured hundreds of students from colleges and universities around the country were properly registered and mentored prior to their presenting at the event. She accompanied the winning teams to Dubai, where our Oman teams won first, second and third place. Jawaher has also been in charge of ESO's Education Program, coordinating volunteers and visiting schools in different regions throughout the Sultanate and in 2018 she focused on Green Schools as a main theme with the aims of expanding this program in 2019 and encouraging more schools to take the lead on incorporating sustainability within their school and community. Additionally, she organizes the Eco-Summer Program for children during the summer months to raise their environmental consciousness and encourage creativity in minimizing waste and reusing materials. Jawaher has become the backbone of the education department and we look forward to having her with us in 2019.



Other Activities

Nature Oman Initiative

Launched to encourage members of the public to get involved in raising environmental awareness and funds for environmental causes within Oman, Nature Oman's first initiative is fundraising through sporting events. Athletes enjoy the connection of fitness and the outdoors and can show their appreciation for the Sultanate by pledging to raise funds through their race. We would like to thank **Tough Mudder, Spartan Arabia and Muscat Marathon** for their support in this initiative.



ECO BOWL 2018

Eight teams competed in ESO's 6th annual corporate bowling competition held to raise funds for ESO. In first place was Central Bank of Oman, second place went to Port of Salalah and third place to Petroleum Development Oman. Prizes and support were provided courtesy of **Kempinski Hotel Muscat, Pinz Bowling Centre, Capital Stores, Rove Adventures, Omantia Scuba and Wagamama**. We would like to thank all the companies who participated and look forward to the 2018 rematch!



Internship Program



Hiranshi Mistry interned with ESO for a period of one month and helped with researching for and updating ESO's database of recycling companies in Oman, maintaining volunteer databases and creating volunteer email templates. She also assisted in creating content for ESO's social media and sorted out photo archives.



Samya Kazmi interned with ESO for one and a half months. She assisted in converting the hardcopy of 'Landscaping with Omani Wild Trees' by the late ESO founding member David Insall into softcopy text. She also conducted independent research and developed a detailed native planting 'naturescaping' guideline and established a native planting list by ecological zones/regions in Oman.



Matilda Crowfoot interned for three weeks at ESO and helped with designing a questionnaire and conduct interviews on the sustainable use of frankincense in Oman. She also reviewed the TESSA tool and drew a plan to assess the value of the ecosystem service provided by frankincense trees by using the TESSA tool.

Thank you to all our 2018 interns for their hard work and dedication.

Volunteers of the Year Award

The ESO Volunteers of the Year Award recognises and celebrates the outstanding efforts of our volunteers. It's our way of thanking them for their generous hours and services throughout the year.

The Volunteers of the Year 2018 Award went to:



Justine Kwaan has dedicated countless hours to ESO both in the production and publication of every annual report as well as producing two stunning films on the organisation and our critically endangered Arabian Sea humpback whale. Justine has an incredible eye for detail and is always ready to help. Although she should have been given this many years ago, we are honoured to call her our volunteer of the year for 2018.



Shaymaa Al Kharusi was invaluable in assisting with graphic designs for Earth Hour and provided everything from backdrop and roll up banners, to social media posts and advertising images. She has since helped on different design tasks and is currently working on Nature Oman posts and designs for the donation boxes. We would like to thank Shaymaa for her dedication to ESO.



Yousuf Al Ghammari started volunteering with ESO in 2017 and has given much of his time to photographing events such as Earth Hour, the Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition and the ECO BOWL. His work has enabled us to document our contribution to conserving Oman's environment and we thank him for his time and energy.



Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al Badi is a member of the Shura Council in Buraimi and was invaluable in making ESO's Buraimi Awareness Campaign a success. His dedication also saw him accompany our team to Masirah Island to gain an insight into the plight of the loggerhead turtle population there so that he was able to advocate for their conservation within the Shura Council. We thank Sheikh Mohammed for his support and willingness to join our cause.

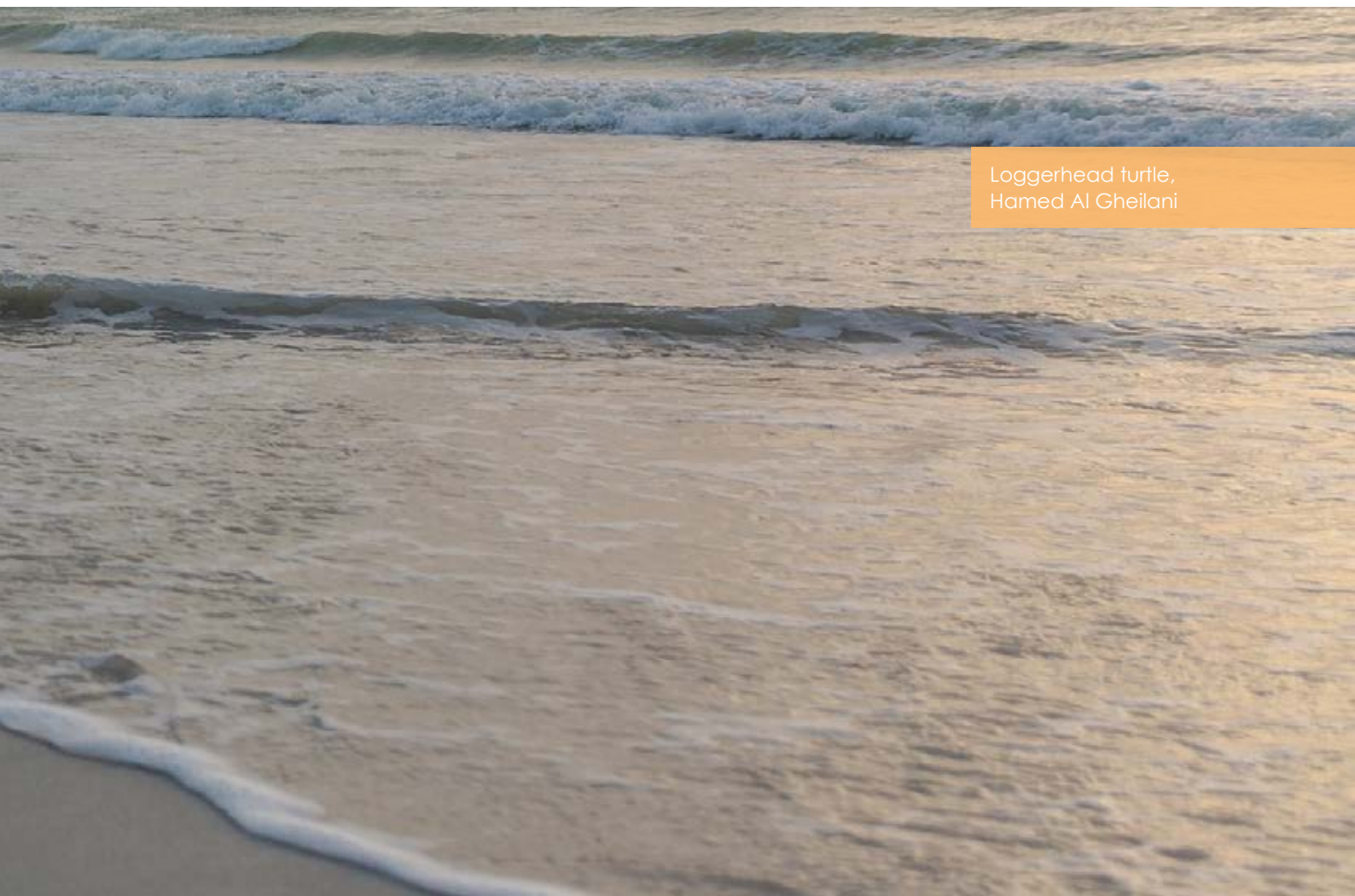
Awards, Grants and Donations

ESO would like to give special thanks to all those who have helped us achieve our goals in 2018. These donors, sponsors and grant agencies are listed below in order of the date donations:

- **Sabco Art** for the design of our annual report
- **Mazoon Printing, Publishing and Advertising** for printing of our annual report
- **Ajit Khimji Group LLC** for free office space
- **TRACCS Oman** for public relations support
- **Apex Press and Publishing** for their continued support
- **InterRent** for vehicle rental
- **Renaissance Services SAOG** for the Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Conservation Project
- **US Fish and Wildlife Service** for Marine Turtle Conservation Project
- **Waterfront & Marina Services SAOC** for free berthing of the ESO boat
- **Shell Oman** for fuel cards
- **Towell Auto Centre** for vehicle rental
- **The Chedi Muscat** for guest donations
- **Alila Jebel Akhdar** for guest donations
- **Coral Muscat** for guest donations
- **Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdhar Resort** for guest donations
- **PDO EcOman Centre** for use of their lecture facilities
- **Crowne Plaza Muscat** for press conference facilities
- **Shell Development Oman** for Training Courses for ESO Employees
- **HSBC** (Pearl Sponsor), **Oman Arab Bank**, **Sohar Aluminium** and **Omzest** (Coral Sponsors), **Grand Hyatt Muscat** (in-kind Sponsor) at the ESO Fundraising Ball
- **A&E**, **Alila Jebel Akhdar**, **Sea Oman**, **Surfsup**, **Twenty3extreme**, **IHG/CP Convention Center**, **SKY School**, **Oreedoo**, **Fitness Guru**, **Anantara Jebel Akhdar**, **Shaymartian**, **2307** and **Mistal** for providing gifts and raffle prizes at the ESO Fundraising Ball



- **Special Technical Services** and **Zawawi Group/ Carillion Alawi** for their sponsorship of Earth Hour
- **Towell Engineering, Pinky Bell, Xcape Muscat, Deepam Odissi Academy, Talentz Enterprises** and **Crowne Plaza Muscat** for in-kind support during Earth Hour
- **TRACCS Oman, Y Magazine, Apex Press and Publishing (Muscat Daily, The Week), Muscat Media Group (Al Shabiba, Times of Oman), Al Roya** for media support during Earth Hour
- **Pinky Bell** for website services for Earth Hour and the Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition
- **Mitsui E&P Middle East B.V.** (Gold Sponsors), **Ominvest**, (Silver Sponsors); **CGG, Daleel Petroleum, Oman LNG Development Foundation** and **Shell Development Oman** (Bronze Sponsors) for sponsorship of the Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition
- **TRACCS Oman, Eshraqa (Khimji Ramdas Social Development Arm), Pinky Bell** and the **Cultural Club** for in-kind sponsorship of the Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition
- **Oman Air** for displaying the ESO awareness film on board flights
- **UMS** for website hosting support
- **VOX Cinemas** for sponsorship of movie nights
- **Horwath Mak Ghazali** for auditing ahead of the AGM
- **Al Busaidy, Mansoor Jamal & Co.** for legal advice and updating ESO's constitution
- **Renaissance Services, Asha Enterprises, Port of Salalah, Ooredoo, HSBC, Port of Duqm, Omantel** and **Central Bank of Oman, Petroleum Development of Oman** for ECO BOWL participation
- **TRACCS Oman** for ECO BOWL media partnership
- **Kempinski Hotel Muscat, Pinz Bowling Centre, Capital Stores, Rove Adventures** and **Omanta Scuba** and **Wagamama** for ECO BOWL prizes
- **National Ferries Company** for providing transportation for Masirah for the net cleanup campaign
- **Bahwan Enterprises** for laptop donation



Loggerhead turtle,
Hamed Al Gheilani

Hotel Donation Program

Oman's Visitors Giving Back

Tourism puts enormous pressure on the environment, but it can also have a positive impact. Through hotels, and to assist with ESO's efforts, we are offering Oman's tourists the chance to support our projects and to give back to Oman and its environment by helping to protect our endangered wildlife and conserve our natural heritage.

Where do donations go?

Donations add much needed funds to our projects focusing on the conservation of Oman's endangered biodiversity, including: the Arabian Sea humpback whale, loggerhead turtles, Egyptian vultures and frankincense trees. These donations will enable ESO to help protect these endangered species and give us the resources to ensure future generations can do the same.

We hope to encourage more hotels to join this program and are grateful to the following hotels who give their guests the opportunity to donate RO1 to ESO upon check out.

THE CHEDI
MUSCAT, OMAN

Alila
الـيـلا . الجبل الاخضر . عُـمـان
JABAL AKHDAR.OMAN

ANANTARA
AL JABAL AL AKHDAR
RESORT

CORAL
Muscat
Hotel & Apartments

Arabian oryx,
Twisted Myrtle



Local and International Highlights

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP13); Dubai, UAE

The 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP13) was held in Dubai from 22nd - 29th October under the theme "Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future." Over 1,360 participants representing 143 of the 170 parties to the Convention, as well as the International Organisation Partners (IOPs) of the Ramsar Convention, UN agencies, intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations attended the meeting. ESO was accepted as an Observer NGO and Maia Sarrouf Willson, ESO's Research and Conservation manager delivered a statement on behalf of dozens of NGOs under the World Wetland Network, calling for collaboration with NGOs for wise use and conservation of wetlands. The aim of the COP13 is to consider progress in the Convention's implementation on the conservation and wise use of wetlands; share knowledge and experiences on technical issues; and plan for the next triennium.



GCC Social Development Award

ESO was honored as a pioneer in the field of social work in Oman by the 'GCC Ministers' Committee on Social Development' at their 4th meeting in Kuwait on November 14th. Board Member Ahmed Al Rashdi attended and accepted the award on ESO's behalf.

Inner Dimension of Climate Change Forum; Polis, Cyprus



Jenan Al Asfoor (ESO Communications Manager) and Juma Al Humaidi (ESO Field Assistant) took part in the Inner Dimension of Climate Change Forum for Middle East countries, which was held on 21-25 October at Polis in Cyprus. The forum was organised by the Global Peace Initiative of Women to discuss the environmental climate challenges facing the region and to encourage working towards positive change in our communities. Discussions were facilitated by mentors from the international spiritual community with critical insights on this subject.

Conferences, Lectures and Workshops attended in 2018

ESO is represented by volunteers, staff and board members at national, regional and international conferences and workshops. Below is a list of those attended in 2018:

UNESCO Regional conference on 'Learning to live sustainably in cities in the Arab Region'; Aswan, Egypt

Fishakathon on Sustainable Fisheries Management organised by Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research; Kuwait City, Kuwait

Environment Authority of Saudi Arabia's 1st Industry Environment Meeting and Exhibition; Dammam Saudi Arabia

International Whaling Committee Scientific Committee Meeting; Bled, Slovenia

Global Summit for The Flyways, Birdlife International; Abu Dhabi, UAE

IUCN and EAD 1st Regional Forum for Biodiversity; Abu Dhabi, UAE

Meeting of Environment Societies of Arabian Gulf Countries organised by Environment Authority of Kuwait; Kuwait City, Kuwait

Regional CITES Shark Implementation Workshop organised by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECA), the International Fund for Animal Welfare and the Pew Charitable Trust; Muscat, Oman

Al Roya International Environment Forum; Muscat Oman

Genobusiness Forum; Muscat, Oman

Birdlife Regional Strategy for Monitoring of Coastal Wetlands and Waterbirds in the Arabian Peninsula; Sharjah, UAE

Clever Cities Workshop, MECA; Muscat, Oman

CSR Network Forum; Dubai, UAE

Cyclones Workshop, Oman Water Society; Muscat, Oman

Global Peace Initiative of Women Inner Dimensions of Climate Change Dialogue; Polis, Cyprus

Meeting of Environment Societies of Arabian Gulf Countries; Kuwait City, Kuwait

RAMSAR Convention (Wetlands of International Significance); Dubai, UAE

Shell Training and Development Courses; Muscat, Oman

Award Ceremony for Best NGOs in the area of Social Work; Kuwait City, Kuwait

Ecosystem Resilience and Preparedness of Communities in the Risk of Natural Disasters; Cairo, Egypt

1st International Conference on Frankincense and Medicinal Plants (SQU); Muscat, Oman

Oman Tourism: Gearing up for the Future organised by Omani French Friendship Association; Muscat, Oman

UNEP Regional Multi-Stakeholder Consultations for West Asia in preparation for the 2019 UN Environment Assembly; Amman, Jordan

UNESCO Regional workshop on Ecosystem Resilience during Natural Disasters; Cairo, Egypt

Bridging the gap between marine resource managers and research institutions in Oman and Australia organised by Sultan Qaboos University; Muscat, Oman

Environmental Beach Management and its role in Coastal Zone Protection organised by the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science; Muscat, Oman

Bonelli's eagle,
Twizted Myrtle

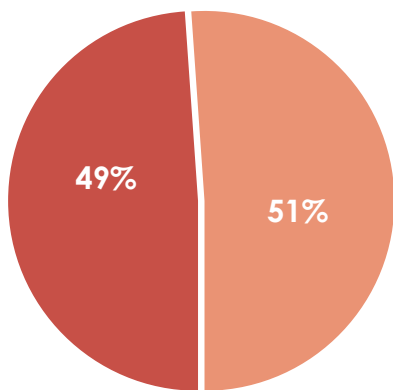


ESO Public Lectures and Events

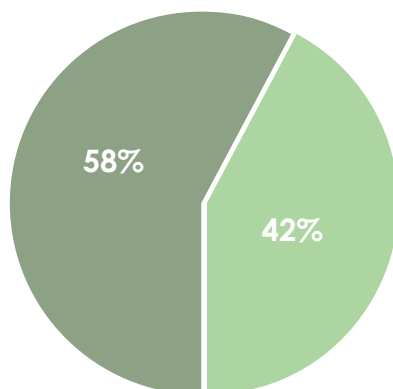
- January:** Public lecture on 'Birdwatching in Oman - Highlights from a 31 Year Journey' by Dr Jens Eriksen
- Public lecture on 'Learning about Whales by Eavesdropping on their Songs' by Dr Salvatore Cerchio
- Public lectures on 'Tracking Endangered Vultures and Eagles to Aid Conservation' by Dr Michael McGrady
- Public lecture on 'Scavenging Birds and Electricity Infrastructure' by Dr Andy Kwarteng
- February:** Public lecture on 'Photographing Elusive Leopards' by David Willis
- Members Yoga and Hike in Riyam Park and Riyam Heights
- April:** Public lecture on 'Adventures in Marine Conservation' by Suaad Al Harthi
- Members visit to Qurm Nature Reserve and Jabal al Akhdar hike
- August:** Public lecture on 'A Hitchhiker's Environmental Exploration' by Saleh Al Khanjari
- September:** Public lecture on 'Travelers of the Deep Blue' by Jenan Al Asfoor
- October:** Lecture on 'Human's Raw Connection to the Environment' by Fahad Al Abri
- Members Visit to Bait al Baraka Breeding Centre
- Movie Night: 'Albatross'
- November:** Members hike to Wadi Himli
- December:** Lecture on "Natural Environment and Architecture in Oman" by Ali Jaffer Al Lawati
- Movie Night: 'Sonic Sea'


Membership

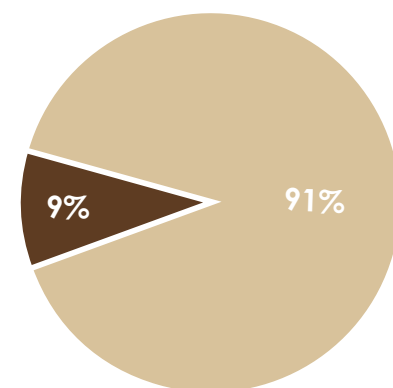
In December 2018 ESO had 314 active members. The charts below show percentages of Omanis, students and male vs female members.



 **Omani**  **Non- Omani**



 **Male**  **Female**



 **Student**  **Non-student**

Membership Benefits

We are proud that in 2018 we have partnered with the following companies to provide our members with discounts and benefits:



Revive Salon & Spa for Men

A true sanctuary premier salon & spa designed exclusively for men to discover. We offer care treatments through essential techniques that relax the mind and the body, harmonize the silhouette, revive the skin and preserve youth in a calm, tranquil environment. Join us at Revive Salon & Spa to discover a new concept in men's grooming. After all, it's not just a haircut or a massage, it's an experience!

Contact: 90356565

Website: www.reviveoman.com

Facebook: @revivesalonspaoman

Instagram: @revivesalonspaoman

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- ESO Members will enjoy 10% off on any spa service
- Offer not applicable during the week prior to Eid Celebrations
- Offer not applicable during any other offer or discount or promotion
- Offer not valid for pre-set packages
- Offer can be available, subject to prior appointment reservation & availability



Capital Veterinary Centre

Capital Veterinary Centre L.L.C "CVC" established in February 2010 provides the highest level of veterinary care available in Oman. Our services include, early age neutering, ophthalmic surgery, orthopedic surgery, dental and scaling and other dental procedures, X-rays, precaution vaccinations along with treatments of various illnesses and diseases. At CVC we even take care of the hygiene of your pets, by providing complete pet grooming services which include washing, hair cutting, ear cleaning, nail clipping and even anal gland expression. In addition we even take care of your pets when you are on leave by providing special accommodation. We are a complete centre, everything under one roof for all your pets need.

For more information visit www.vetoman.com

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- On purchase of one grooming service from the following packages (wash, blow dry, nail clipping and ear cleaning) or (haircut, washing blow dry, nail clipping and ear cleaning) receive the second service of equal or lower value free
- On purchase of one day boarding service of cat/dog along with food, receive the second boarding day free
- On purchase of one doctor consultation receive the second consultation free
- 15% off dental and scaling under Sedation
- 15% off dog Spay or Castration (neutering) operation
- 25% off for stray animals for any service
- 20% off Rabies vaccine for cats/dogs
- 15% off DHPPL vaccine for dogs
- 15% off tri cat vaccine for cats
- 30% off microchip for cat and dogs



Al Qurum Veterinary Clinic

Al Qurum Veterinary Clinic where your pets get the best Pet-erinary care in Oman. Visit us at our Main Hospital in Madinat Sultan Qaboos or at our branch in Azaiba.

Find our details on www.muscatvets.com or contact us on info@muscatvets.com. MSQ Hospital – +968 24607735 or Azaiba Clinic - +968 24121173.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 10% discount on Vaccinations, Routine Consultations and Neuterings
- Discount valid in both branches (Al Azaiba and MSQ)



The Crafty Kitchen

Our passion for Food and Art has taken us on many adventures to all corners of the world experiencing the rich cultures, history and diversity that surrounded us.

Instagram: @thecraftykitchenmuscat

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 10% on food and beverages
- Discounts valid at The Crafty Kitchen –Muscat Bay branch only
- The discount offer exclude branches at PDO & TAISM



The Bank Restaurant

Instagram: @thebankoman

Facebook: @thebankom

Telephone: 95299136

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 10% off the final bill



Dhekrayat Spa

The Spa aims to make its clients visit a memorial and enriching experience with its magical venue that takes them back to the olden days with beautiful Arabic designed surroundings and feel. It's intended to be a social retreat where ladies come to relax, unwind and distress. We promise to make women look and feel great by providing a high quality products inspired from our Omani and Arabian traditions, our professional experience & superb service

Qurum Oasis, 2ndFloor, Sayh Al Malih Street

Instagram: @dhekrayatspa
Facebook: @dhekrayatspa
Telephone: 22011011
Mobile: 94330033

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 15% discount on Haircut, Blow-dry, Massage, Manicure/ Pedicure and Moroccan bath
- Discounts not valid during Eid preparation
- Discount not valid on packages & monthly promotions
- Discount is valid on week days only.



Ayana Spa

We are Oman's first Organic Green Spa, inspired by nature, using only premium organic products that are completely safe for the body and the environment. We have carefully selected luxurious treatments from around the world to rejuvenate and beautify your skin and hair, calm your mind and harmonize your soul. A relaxing ambiance of soothing music and the fragrance of pleasant Organic aromatic oils fill your senses soon as you enter our doors.

Amber International LLC
2nd Floor Al Sarooj Plaza, Muscat, Oman
email: info@ayanaspaspa.com
website: www.ayanaspaspa.com
Fax: 24693419
Telephone: 24693435

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 10% discount on all regular priced spa & beauty services above RO7.000
- 10% discount is valid for Ayana Spa cash vouchers and service vouchers*
- Discount not valid on packages & monthly promotions
- Discount is valid on Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday of the week.
- Discount is not valid during all Eid period.



Park Inn by Radisson Hotel & Residence Duqm

Hotel & Residence Duqm is a 4 star located midway between the cities of Muscat and Salalah. It is an ideal accommodation choice when travelling in Oman. The 73 contemporary chalets and apartments are spread over a large area providing a feeling of space and privacy. The design and the character of all accommodation units and the public areas are inimitably Park Inn by Radisson, designed for today's new generation traveller. It features onsite restaurants and pool bar, 24 hours room service, free Wi-Fi access throughout the hotel, laundry service, concierge, business centre, children's area, spa, tennis court, gym, outdoor pool and 2 modern & versatile meeting rooms for a variety of social and business events. The hotel location provides guests with easy access.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- We offer 15% discount for Park inn Duqm
- Not valid for any hotel promotions.



Park Inn by Radisson Muscat

A 4 star hotel centrally located hotel in Al Khuwair on Sultan Qaboos Street. It displays a modern, sophisticated décor with state-of-the-art facilities. The 175 tastefully furnished guest rooms including seven suites and handicapped in the colourful and vibrant Park Inn style have been done keeping the business traveller in mind. Sama Terrazza rooftop lounge/bar, RBG Grill Restaurant, Palm Restaurant, rooftop pool, gym, sauna & steam rooms, salon, gift shop, free WiFi, 5 meeting rooms, business centre and free parking.

*Both Park Inn by Radisson Hotels in Oman are Green Key, Safe hotels Premium Level and HACCP certified properties.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- We offer 15% discount for Park inn Muscat
- Not valid for any hotel promotions.



Brow Bar Salon

Brow Bar, your one stop salon! Get pampered without compromising quality. Also try what nature has to offer with Brow Bar's special natural treatments.

Instagram: @browbarmuscat
Telephone: 24591943
Working Hours – 10am to 10pm

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Buy 1 and get 20% off the next service of same or less amount
- This offer is not valid with any vouchers, promotions or peak and festive seasons



InnerChi Center.

InnerChi Center is a unique Oman-based Yoga Studio which takes an innovative approach to providing a relaxing and holistically rejuvenating experience that will leave you feeling refreshed and renewed. We provide our clients with a variety of options when it comes managing their overall health and wellness. Make the positive lifestyle change you've been wanting; see what InnerChi Center has to offer you.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Offer 30% on our yoga packages (valid for one time per member) and not valid with any other offer.



Laser Maxx Tag

Laser Maxx from the kingdom of Netherlands. It's Located at the Fun Zone - Near the Qurum Natural Park. Muscat.

Contact Number: 95677480
Facebook: @LaserMaxxoman

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 2 OMR instead of 3 OMR
- Not valid on Eid holidays



Wave Summit

Break your routine by joining our kayaking trips and enjoying spectacular views of Oman from a different angel

Instagram: @wave_summit

Contact:
Bassam Al Jabri
97471484

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 20% discount for ESO members up to 5 times per person on any of 2 hours program
- Offer is not valid in full day trips
- Offer valid during week days only, from Sunday to Thursday
- Members have to book for their trip and wait for confirmation as we have to check weather forecast for sea conditions
- Members have to provide ESO membership number when booking for a trip



UbCool Adventures

The fastest growing online adventure booking platform with 700+ companies in 70+ destinations.

Website: www.ub-cool.com
Instagram: ub.cool
Telephone: +968 71708777

TERMS & CONDITIONS

30\$ discount per booking
Use special ESO promo code "ESO2018"



Sama Heights Resort, Jebel Shams

Experience the beauty of Sama Heights, Jebel Shams in the only true eco resort in Oman and affordable luxury within your reach.

Telephone: +96892721999
Email: samaheights@samaresorts.com
Instagram: @samaresortsandspa
Facebook: @samaresortsandspa

Room type	Current rate	High season 20%	Low season 30%
Grand Chalet	120.000	96.000	84.000
Mountain View	85.000	68.000	59.000
Chalet	75.000	60.000	52.500
Bungalow	60.000	48.000	42.000
Arabic Tent	45.000	36.000	31.500

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Rates are inclusive of all taxes
- Rates including half board "Dinner & Breakfast"
- Offer not valid in public holidays (special holiday 10% discount only)
- Maximum occupancy is 2 adults + 1 child per room in both properties, except "Family Chalet Room" in Sama Al Wasil Camp: 2 Adults + 2 kids or 4 Adults.
- High season: 1st October – 30th April
- Low season: 1st May – 31st September
- Applicable for ESO employees and members ONLY.
- ESO employees and members should be present for check in and holding the membership ID card.



Sama Al Wasil Desert Camp, Al Sharqiya

Sands Adventure in the desert like never before. Discover the home of the bedouins and experience the true spirit of desert life.

Telephone: +96891126369
Email: samaalwasil@samaresorts.com
Instagram: @samaresortsandspa
Facebook: @samaresortsandspa

Room type	Current rate	High season 20%	Low season 30%
Sultan Tent	65.000	52.000	45.500
Family Chalet Room	95.000	76.000	66.500
Chalet Room	60.000	48.000	42.000

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Rates are inclusive of all taxes
- Rates including half board "Dinner & Breakfast"
- Offer not valid in public holidays (special holiday 10% discount only)
- Maximum occupancy is 2 adults + 1 child per room in both properties, except "Family Chalet Room" in Sama Al Wasil Camp: 2 Adults + 2 kids or 4 Adults.
- High season: 1st October – 30th April
- Low season: 1st May – 31st September
- Applicable for ESO employees and members ONLY.
- ESO employees and members should be present for check in and holding the membership ID card.



Whale shark,
Nicholai Georgiou

Corporate Membership

ESO is grateful for the support of all our corporate members:

- Al Anwar Holdings
- Averda Waste Management
- Ajit Khimji Group
- Daleel Petroleum
- Khimji Ramdas
- Majid Al Futtaim Properties
- Nama Group
- Oman Gas Company
- OHI
- Oman Sail
- Omifco
- Ominvest
- Omran
- Orpic
- Qarat Al Milh Petroleum
- Shell Oman Marketing
- Sohar Aluminium
- Sohar Port & Free Zone
- Strabag

As an exclusive benefit to our corporate members, ESO has developed Oman-relevant guidelines for Greening Your Office and Organising Corporate Clean-Ups.

Collaboration with International Organisations

- United Nations Environment Program
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature
- International Whaling Commission
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- Birdlife International, Middle East Regional Office
- Emirates Environmental Group
- Emirates Nature - WWF
- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration - South West Fisheries and Science Centre
- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration - Alaska Fisheries Science Centre, Marine Mammal Laboratory
- Sackler Institute of Comparative Genomics, American Museum of Natural History
- University of Exeter, Centre for Ecology and Conservation
- Cetacean Conservation Medicine Group
- Peruvian Centre for Cetacean Research
- Instituto Aqualie
- Motte Marine Laboratory
- University of Derby
- Smithsonian Institution
- Blue Planet Marine Ltd of New Zealand
- Durham University
- French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea
- Kelonia, La Réunion
- International Avian Research
- New England Aquarium
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Abu Dhabi Office)
- Sri Lankan Killer Whale Project
- Arabian Sea Whale Network
- Vulture Conservation Foundation
- Wild Me
- UNESCO
- Slovenian Marine Mammal Society
- Anglo-Omani Society
- WWF-Pakistan
- Oceanswell
- Bernd Meyburg Foundation for Raptor Research and Conservation
- Clear Blue Photo
- Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute
- Megaptera Marine Conservation
- National Institute of Ocean Technology (India)
- Globice (Renuinon Island)
- Academia de Leviantano

Acknowledgements

There are many people we wish to thank for their support, hard work and dedication to ESO:

First and foremost, special thanks go to ESO Patron, HH Sayyid Tarik bin Shabib Al Said, who has always supported the Society and has been instrumental in its success.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development have always been staunch supporters of ESO and we thank them for their guidance and understanding of our work.

None of ESO's work would be possible without much needed funding from our corporate members, sponsors and supporters. We thank all of them and hope that their generosity will continue for years to come.

The ESO staff are the backbone of the Society and its work and we thank all that have been with us throughout the years. We were sad to see Siham Al Tuwaijri, Yusra Jaffer and Abdulaziz Al Alawi leave ESO but wish them all the best of luck!

Congratulations to Atika Ahmed for the beautiful new addition to her family. We wish you all the best in your new adventure!

ESO Members are the organisation's ambassadors and we thank every one of our dedicated members for coming to events, dedicating their time and supporting the conservation of Oman's environment.

Ajit Khmiji Group, who have given ESO free office space for the last few years and Towell Auto Centre and InterRent who provide our staff vehicles.

Oman's media have been extremely supportive in making our efforts public, and ESO would like to thank all media houses for their continued coverage of our projects and successes. Special thanks go to Apex Press and Publishing who have given free advertising space to ESO over the last seven years for which we are extremely grateful, and TRACCS Oman for providing our PR services.

Volunteer Acknowledgements

Volunteers are a very important part of our ESO's work. In particular we would like to thank:

Justine Kwaan for her dedication, support, time and energy in the design and production of ESO's Annual Report.

Abeer Al Saadi, Aboubacar Ahamada Roufay, Ali Al Lawati, Asma Alkalbani, Athar Al Fedhah, Ayat Dhabbari, Ayat Saleh, Dheya Al Wahaibi, Fatma Al Tobi, Georgina Benison, Ghadeer Al Mahmuli, Haitham Al Kalbani, Hamida Al Habsi and her son Abdullah, Iman Al Balushi, Isma Saleem, Jaida Al Hinai, Jaya Chabbi, Kamal Ganatra, Khalid Al Khaldi, Kowarthanan Ganesha, Lamyia Al Mahmuli, Magda Al Busaidi, Marwa Al Wadhahi, Mohammed Al Qarni, Muhammad Imran, Muna Aldawoodi, Nasra Al Sibani, Nawar Albusaidi, Neha Vohra, Nida Jasfan, Piyush Singh, Salma Saeed Elrashid, Sarojni Gnajoo and Yousuf Al Ghammari for their time and help during the Earth Hour event.

Majaz Band, Amir Abdulrahim Al Raisi and Mashal Ismail Alzadjali for providing live music, **Aishwariya, Srijita and the Katak Dance Group** for their outstanding performances during the Earth Hour event.

Be'ah Outreach for support during the Earth Hour event

Hawaa Al Shuraiqi for being a volunteer photographer, and for delivering a 'Healthy Food' session during the ECO Summer program.

Anastassiya Chulskaya, Assad Al Aamri, Juma Al Farsi, Al Amin, Iqbal Hossain, Shareef Miah, Mohd Hanif for their tireless support to the **Masirah net** clean-up efforts.

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Fahad Al Abri, Adhra Al Yahyai, Marwa Al Wadhahi, Kowarthanana Ganesha, Qais Al Zakwani, Maher Al Lamki, Usama Barwani, Medina Ilyasova, Emil Baikov, Natalia Cazacova and Yasser Macki for joining **Nature Oman** and running the **Tough Mudder** and **Spartan Race**.


Khalid Al Khaldi, Siham Al Handhli and Yousuf Al Ghammari for being our active volunteers during the event and **Taha Al Qasmi, Hawaa Al Shuraiqi, Humaid Al Qasmi, Sulieman Al Rahbi, Aisha Al Matrooshi, Hamad Al Shidhani, Abdullateef Al Mamari, and Shatha Al Rawahi** for being committed student ambassadors and playing a key role in ESO's Inter-College Public Environmental Speaking Competition. **Hassan Al Masroori** for filming the event.

Dr Mutasim Al Mamari for his outstanding MC skills, **Hamza Al Saberi** for being a skillful reader of Quran during the Opening Ceremony of the Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition. Our judging panel: **Fatma Al Dawodi, Fatma Bahwan, Habiba Al Marashi and Ibrahim Al Ajmi** for their time and commitment.

Said Al Rubkhi for his assistance and **Mohamed Al Mahrooqi** for participating for three days in the fieldwork as part of our Raptors Conservation Program.

Thank you to all the volunteers who may not be mentioned and have helped in any way during our community outreach, education and membership drives in 2018.

Thank you to all our volunteers without whom our work would not be possible.

A photograph of a Eurasian stone curlew standing on a rocky, scrubby landscape. The bird has mottled brown and grey plumage, a yellow eye, and long, thin legs. It is facing left. The background consists of dark, jagged rocks and sparse, low-lying green plants.

Eurasian stone curlew,
Labid Al Amri



Camel,
Twisted Myrtle

